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POPULATION TODAY

Vol. 14, No. 12 December 1986

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U.S. assistance affects family planning everywhere. See page 3.

PRB *A publication of the Population Reference Bureau, Inc.*

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Holiday Season is upon us – and so is a tidal wave of 2.2 billion Christmas cards in U.S. mails (the annual haul, according to a Hallmark spokesperson), a tsunami of paper roughly equal in weight to the battleship *Missouri* (55,000 tons).

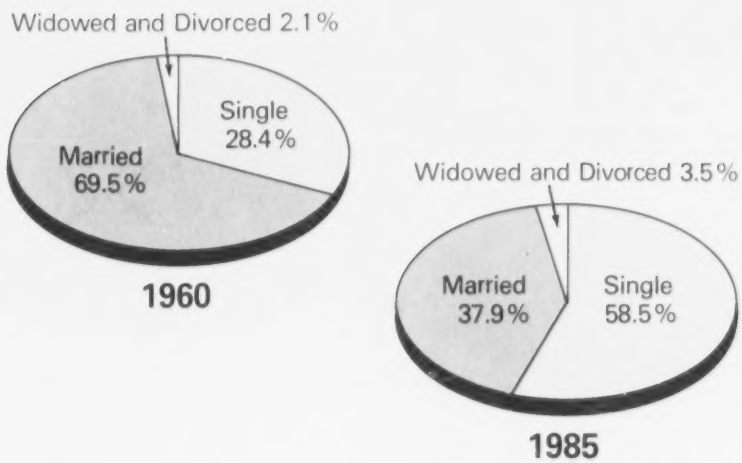
But when you factor down this giant totality, it works out to a little more than 9 cards per person; 12 cards per person 16 years of age and over. All of a sudden, 2.2 billion greeting cards seem like a trickle. People must be using the telephone.

The U.S., we sometimes forget, is Big. It holds nearly a quarter of a billion people (that's B for billion), or 2.4 x 10 to the 8th power, to be more scientific. Its urban areas (including 176 cities over 100,000) have as many people as India's. Tiny Rhode Island alone is more populous than 41 of the 171 countries on PRB's *1986 World Population Data Sheet*. Some quantitatively impressive stats to ponder, during what we hope will be a qualitatively Very Happy Holiday for *PT* readers everywhere!

– Art Haupt

SPEAKING GRAPHICALLY

Marital Status of U.S. Females, 20-24



U.S. women are postponing marriage. The median age at first marriage for women increased from 20 years in 1960 to 23 in 1985, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. The result: A marked rise in the population of U.S. single women aged 20-24.

Source of chart data: U.S. Census Bureau

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PRB MEMBERSHIP

In addition to POPULATION TODAY, PRB members receive annually four in-depth POPULATION BULLETINS, two wall charts (the WORLD and UNITED STATES POPULATION DATA SHEETS), the quarterly population education newsletter, INTERCHANGE, with two accompanying teaching modules, and POPULATION TRENDS AND PUBLIC POLICY papers as they appear.

	U.S.	Outside the U.S.
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Educator* (30% discount)	28	35
Student* (50% discount)	20	25
Library/nonprofit organizations	50	65
Other organizations	250	315

*Educators and students should send supporting documentation.

U.S. Population Aid Is Surviving

November's Congressional elections hinged on many local and national issues, and international population assistance was probably not uppermost in voters' minds. (While polls have shown the U.S. public supporting it, population assistance has never been an issue of particularly high visibility.) Nevertheless, as the smoke clears, the election results could have implications for the future of population assistance.

By virtue of their eight-seat pickup, Senate Democrats now hold a 55-45 majority in that chamber and hence get to choose the Senate Committee chairs when the 100th Congress convenes in January 1987. (It was the Republicans who had this happy option from January 1981 through 1986.)

Committee chairpeople put their personal stamp on a committee's agenda and legislative products. And taken on balance, most Hill watchers believe that there may well be a more friendly climate in Congress for international population assistance.

Doing the Limbo

The Population Crisis Committee (PCC), a Washington-based advocacy group, tallies Congressional attitudes toward population assistance. After the November election they estimated that the Senate will gain one pro-population-assistance vote, bringing the number to 52. The House showed a three-vote shift, to 196, still well short of the 218-vote majority. According to this tally, the Senate remains the chamber that votes more consistently for population assistance.

Sharon Camp, PCC's Vice President and Director of Education and Public Policy, voiced her opinion that the most important population consequence of the election will be the ascendancy of Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) to the chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. Inouye, long favorable to foreign assistance, is in line to replace Sen. Bob Kasten (R-Wis.). This subcommittee writes the foreign-aid appropriations bill.

In the 1980s, foreign-aid funding has taken its share of lumps during the legislative process. Prior to last year, foreign aid levels had risen each year for five years. The increases, however, were generally in the categories of military and security aid, including economic support funds (ESF), to countries considered strategically important; of this, about half goes to Israel and Egypt.

> During the 1980s, Congress repeatedly raised the level of population aid. For FY 1987, the outcome was different

Development assistance, which includes population, has actually shrunk during this period, when adjusted for inflation. But international population aid itself fared tolerably well until last year, with Congress repeatedly raising the level of funding above that offered in the Administration's budget. In Fiscal Year 1984, for example, Congress approved $240 million (the Administration had asked for $212 million). In FY 1985, Congress passed $290 million ($250 million asked).

In FY 1986, Congress passed $250 million ($250 million asked); this was later reduced to $239 million as part of across-the-board budget cuts mandated by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit-reduction law.

For FY 1987, the outcome was different. This time around, the Administration asked for $250 million and the Congress responded with $234.6 million (a compromise between the House's $239 million and the Senate's $230 million). The reason: budget constraints and the threat of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. Except for entitlements and certain poverty-directed programs, nearly every other federal program was suffering similar cuts.

Like the Limbo stick featured in a popular dance of the distant past, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings goals are becoming increasingly difficult to Limbo under.

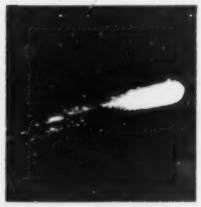
Assuming tax receipts for FY 1988 come in as estimated and federal funding levels are frozen, the FY 1988 deficit is estimated to be $61 billion over the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings target for that year. This shortfall would have to be made up from the 18 percent of federal programs vulnerable to budget cuts (assuming that entitlements and defense are exempted). Since these programs' budgets total about $180 billion, they be subject to blanket cuts of 30 percent.

Continued on page 6

Family planning worker in Ghana

1986—The Year in Population

1986 had its population highs and its population lows. Indisputably, the "high" was the once-in-76-years appearance in our inner Solar System of Halley's Comet. (The population connection? The comet's discoverer, Edmund Halley, was a pioneer demographer and originator of the life table; see the Jan. *PT*.)



Comet

The "low" was probably the publication of West Germany's record-low 1985 total fertility rate (TFR) which dipped to 1.28 average lifetime births per woman.

Perhaps the U.S.'s most important population-related event was the passage of the most far-reaching immigration reform legislation since 1965. Debated for years in Congress, the bill was declared legislatively dead in September but was miraculously revived in October when a controversial side issue -- amnesty for illegal agricultural workers -- was resolved in the House of Representatives. The law's main features include employer sanctions and amnesty for illegal aliens residing continuously in the U.S. since 1982. (See Oct. and Nov. *PTs*.)

Two countries reached fertility-reduction milestones in 1986. South Korea announced its achievement of replacement-level fertility, with a TFR of 2.1 children per woman. Singapore's TFR dropped to 1.7. With its goal of low fertility thus achieved, Singapore's national Population and Family Planning Board is being disbanded.

Immigrants

Other demographic headlines in the U.S. included the publication of a study by university researchers which detailed the chances (reported as bleak) for marriage of never-married college educated women. (See Sept. *PT*.) These statistics were tossed back and forth, while the media alternately blamed women for the fate ordained for them by the statistics, and chastised the researchers for terrorizing women with data.

The ruckus was quelled somewhat by another study, this one by demographer Jean Moorman, whose calculations gave higher estimates of marriages among older women. Another crisis solved. (See Oct. *PT*.)

The famous marriage study aside, 1986's most eagerly awaited and energetically debated demographic study was a provocative report, *Population Growth and Economic Development: Policy Questions*, issued by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in March. The NAS's Committee on Population was commissioned by AID to reexamine the links between population and economic growth. The Committee took a more guarded view of the adverse effects of population growth on economic development. It concluded that, in general, slower population growth is a positive factor in achieving development, though there exist a few positive aspects of population growth. (See Mar. *PT*.)

IUD

In August, AID announced its decision to withdraw the U.S.'s $25 million 1986 contribution to the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), charging that the UNFPA contributes to China's population activities, some of which, in AID's view, promote coercive abortion and sterilization practices. But China's government insists that such abuses do not reflect official policy and are being corrected. U.S. policy bars funding of nongovernmental organizations that promote abortion in other countries. Whether or not the UNFPA fits that description is a matter of controversy, since UNFPA supplies China with demographic and teaching assistance and does not sponsor Chinese family planning programs. (See Sept. *PT*.)

The IUD is essentially history as a contraceptive choice for U.S. women. The last major manufacturer, G.D. Searle, withdrew from the U.S. market the IUDs it manufactures because of "unwarranted" lawsuits and the expense of liability insurance. Searle manufactures the Copper-7 and Tatum-T IUDs. This action left only one IUD available in the U.S., the hormone-releasing Progestasert-T, manufactured by the Alza Corporation. Alza subsequently limited distribution of its IUD to 1986 customers at 1985 buying levels. (See Mar. and July/Aug. *PTs*.)

—*JA*

SURVEY REPORT

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is demographically renowned as one Latin American country which has experienced a substantial decline in fertility since 1950. That decline, however, leveled off at 3.4 children per woman, far short of the "replacement level" of about 2.1 required for an eventual stable population size. Now, the latest survey from that country indicates that fertility has risen.

Early results from a national fertility survey taken in the first months of 1986 by the Asociación Demográfica Costarricense estimate a total fertility rate (TFR) of 3.7 average lifetime births per woman in 1986, up from 3.4 in 1982. These survey estimates agree quite closely with registered vital data, which are considered to be complete.

Contraceptive use is quite high among Costa Rican women; nearly 70 percent of married or cohabiting women reported that they were using a method. It seems clear that family planning allows Costa Rican women to have the number of children they desire, but that number is considerably higher than the 2 children per woman assumed in most population projections for that country.

In the 1986 survey, 54 percent of the married women interviewed who had two living children said that they wished to cease childbearing. This, of course, means that nearly half want more children. About one-third of the women with three children said that they want more children, indicating a national level of desired childbearing above the two-child-per family level.

The pill was the most commonly used contraceptive method among married women, with 19.3 percent of the respondents using it, but female sterilization (16.5 percent) and the condom (12.4 percent) were also significant. Traditional methods were used by only about 10 percent of respondents.

—*CH*

A Popu-landian Tale

Populandia, PRB's mythical mini-continent, marches on. As of Dec. 31, 1986, its population is estimated to be 704,244,756, none of whom is more than nine years old.

As faithful *PT* readers will recall,* that's because the verdant South Pacific island nation itself was founded only nine years ago. Beginning Jan. 1, 1978, this empty patch of volcanic real estate (160,000 sq. miles) began serving as a sanctuary for all the world's natural increase (i.e., the 60 percent "surplus" of births over deaths; for every death on earth, there are 2½ births).

The goal was to alleviate population pressures the world over. But this experiment in population redistribution has now become the world's third most populous country, containing one out of every seven people in the world, and adding another 226,779 people per day.

In 1978, Populandia received only 200,677 newcomers every day; then, however, the statistical base – the world's population – was smaller, 4.2 billion.

Since then, roughly 1.1 billion people have been born, and 0.4 billion people have died. (Tragically, one out of 10 of those 1.1 billion births wound up in the deaths column, according to global mortality statistics. One out of every four deaths on earth occurs to those under 5.) The remaining 0.7 billion increase in world population in those nine years became migrants to Populandia.

The continent, whose purpose is to relieve population crowding, is itself getting on the congested side (4,400 people per sq. mile, a continent as densely populated as Denver, Colo.). And not only that – in not too many years, Populandians themselves will be of childbearing age. By that time, a "Populandia II" may have to be created next door. – *A.H.*

*See, e.g., *PT*, December 1985, December 1984 and numerous pre-1984 issues of *Intercom*.

PRB's Event-Filled Year

Increased international activity highlighted 1986 at the Population Reference Bureau, Inc. Indeed, PRB's world travelers covered the globe. From Addis Ababa to Zimbabwe, from Bangladesh to Peru, PRB staff members were there, providing support to conferences and spreading the word about population.

Back in Washington, DC., staff members enjoyed their first full year at 777 14th Street NW, and watched the ranks of the staff swell to a peak of 33.

All of PRB's publications were redesigned in late 1985, and the new look debuted in January 1986. All publications now sport a PRB "family" appearance, with a new logo, bold strokes of color, and compatible typefaces. The graphics ante rises.

PRB's IMPACT (Innovative Materials for Population Action) project moved ahead in 1986. Initiated in 1985, IMPACT produces and distributes handsomely packaged population-related publications for a targeted audience of Third World policymakers. Team members produced their first thematic booklet and poster, "Family Planning Saves Lives," for distribution to 5,000 influential developing country nationals (see photo, page 7). In addition, the team supported four international conferences with booklets and posters, and negotiated subcontracts in Ghana and Turkey. (IMPACT is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development [AID].)

In fall of 1986, PRB was awarded a subcontract of The Futures Group's OPTIONS project, also funded by AID. PRB's portion of that project will include maintaining a database on population policy trends. In addition, PRB will sponsor the Fellows Program for developing country nationals who are studying population-policy-related subjects in the U.S. (see box at right). Fellows will become acquainted with effective methods of disseminating demographic data to policymakers. Finally, OPTIONS team members at PRB will coordinate the Observational Travel Program whereby citizens of developing countries who are formulating population policies for their home nations can travel to other countries where such policies have been successfully implemented.

With financial assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation and the AID – Development Education Program, a large and multifaceted group of PRB employees put together a kit of population-related materials for participants in Model UN conferences nationwide. Within weeks of its Nov. 1 publication, some 700 orders for this free kit flooded in.

1986 was a year for goodbyes to long-time staff members. Robert P. Worrall, President of PRB from 1979 to 1984 and since then President Emeritus and Senior Consultant, retired in November. Leon F. Bouvier retired in August as Vice President, though he continues his demographic work at PRB as a consultant. In addition, Patricia Cancellier, Director of the Population Education Program, left PRB in May for the greener grasses of Cleveland, Ohio. – *J.A.*

Call for PRB Fellows

PRB is looking for applicants to a fellows program for graduate students in population studies and other fields relevant to population programs in developing countries. Applicants must be developing country nationals.

Participants in the fellows program will present brief papers at a one-day Population Policy Seminar at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America in Chicago on April 29, 1987. In addition, in July 1987, fellows will attend a two-week workshop at PRB in Washington, DC., where they will receive further training on how to present demographic data and information clearly and usefully to policymakers.

The program is part of the OPTIONS project (see story above). Actual travel costs will be provided, along with a per diem and small stipend.

Interested candidates should write to Wendy Patriquin at PRB, 777 14th St. NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC., 20005, describing their interests, qualifications, and reasons for applying to this program. A curriculum vitae, brief description of current research and plan for explaining its policy impact, and letters of recommendation from professors are also requested. Deadline for application is Feb. 13, 1987.

Population Aid

Continued from page 3

Of course, other factors in the budget equation are not cast in concrete. The government theoretically has four options: it could raise taxes, limit expenditures still further, cut into entitlement programs, or simply abolish Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. While all these possibilities are unpopular, the latter may turn out to be the least unpopular.

The eroded consensus

In any case, challenges remain for future U.S. population programs. Legislative restrictions on the use of population funds remain in place. This has meant the cutting off of funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (in 1984) because of a law banning funding of nongovernmental organizations that directly or indirectly support abortion programs. In 1986, the UN Fund for Population Activities lost its U.S. funding because of its support of China's population program.

And it cannot be denied that the traditional national consensus concerning the need for foreign aid has eroded over the years. Combine that with an increasingly involved legislative process, and the chances for legislative gridlock are great.

Since 1981, Congress has succeeded in passing a foreign-aid authorization and appropriation only once. In other years, it has finessed the legislation quagmire by passing a continuing resolution, which in effect carries over the previous year's bill. This happened most recently with the FY 1987 budget.

Dramatic changes in foreign aid and population policy or funding are unlikely. Instead, the future is likely to see more continuing resolutions and serious political opposition blocking renewed funding for UNFPA or IPPF. The most significant change affecting the less developed countries might be more protectionistic trade policies.

Or so the picture seems now. Usually, the more Washington changes, the more it remains the same. But then, who would have thought two months ago that after a tradition of studied inaction on illegal migration, Congress would up and pass the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986? —*AH*

SOFTWHERE

The Claremont Statistical Program for Small Samples (CSPSM) is a simple BASIC shareware program for IBM PC computers (suggested contribution: $10.00), useful for quickly calculating chi-squares, Pearson r correlations, t tests, means and standard deviations, z scores, one-way analyses of variance, and simple regressions and predictions. The number of samples is limited to a maximum of 100, but CSPSM does the job quickly and easily. Available on some computer bulletin boards as STATPAK, or contact the author: Peter M. Nardi, Sociology Dept., Pitzer College, Claremont, Calif. 91711.

POSITIONS/PROFESSIONALS

Program Officer, for International Projects Assistance Services, a North Carolina-based nonprofit organization. Applicants should be knowledgeable in international family planning program development, have some field experience, and possess excellent writing and interpersonal skills. Degree in public health or related field preferred. Position requires extensive travel and fluency in French. Resume with salary history should be sent to: Executive Director, IPAS, PO. Box 100, Carrboro, N.C. 27510.

POPULATION UPDATE

Estimated United States Population:

As of July 1, 1986	241,489,000
As of July 1, 1985	239,283,000

The above estimates include armed forces overseas and are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 994.

Estimated World Population:

As of December 1986	4,977,000,000
Annual growth	83,000,000

Estimated by extrapolation of the mid-1986 population given on PRB's 1986 World Population Data Sheet.

Latest Provisional Statistics for the U.S.: July 1986

	12 months ending with July					
	Number		Rate			
Item	1986	1985	1986	1985	1984	1983
Live births	3,723,000	3,739,000	15.5	15.7	15.5	15.8
Deaths	2,097,000	2,082,000	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.6
Natural increase	1,626,000	1,657,000	6.8	6.9	6.9	7.2
Marriages	2,396,000	2,457,000	10.0	10.3	10.4	10.5
Divorces	1,192,000	1,172,000	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0
Infant deaths	39,500	39,600	10.6	10.6	10.7	11.0
Population base (in millions)			240.1	237.5	235.0	232.9

Note: Rates are given per 1,000 population, except for infant deaths, which are given per 1,000 live births. Rates are based on revised population estimates from the 1980 Census.

Source: Monthly Vital Statistics Report (Vol. 35, No. 7) from the National Center for Health Statistics.

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TAKE A NUMBER

Go South, Young Person: Several well-known trends have been reversing themselves as of late in U.S. migration, according to the latest report from the Census Bureau. The South was the only region of the U.S. to gain population by net in-migration from March 1983 to March 1984, while the West did not, for the first time in decades. In addition, metropolitan counties had a net inflow from nonmetropolitan counties in that year, an opposite situation from the famous "Rural Renaissance" of the 1970s. The rate of movement increased for only the third time in the history of the Current Population Survey; in 1983–1984, 17.3 percent of the population changed residence, compared to 16.6 percent in the previous year. Migration continued to contribute to population loss in central cities. From 1983 to 1984, 3.3 million people moved into central cities and 5.1 million moved out, resulting in a net loss of 1.7 million.

Good news for migration fans: The Bureau is considering adding more detail to the 1990 Census migration question. Reasons for moving and activity one year ago may be added to the Census to provide better analyses of moving in the U.S.

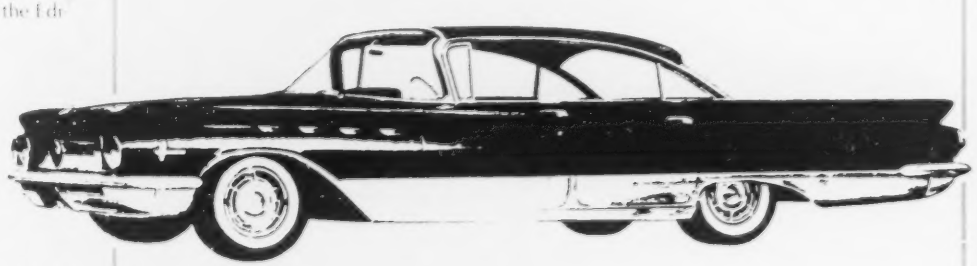
Here and There: Legal immigration to the U.S. and territories totaled 570,009 in Fiscal Year 1985, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. New York remains the top port of entry with 115,611, although few pass the Statue of Liberty. . . several European countries show resumed decrease in fertility from previously somewhat higher and stable levels; Austria declined to a total fertility rate of 1.52 children per woman in 1984 and Belgium fell to 1.56 (provisional data). . . from the Census Bureau and the Conference Board's colorful new pamphlet *How We Live*: half of U.S. homes in 1940 had no full plumbing, 35 million Americans still lack health insurance today, the 1970s saw an end to decrease in poverty, and about half of all Americans spend some time in college, compared to one-fourth twenty years ago.

—CH

ADDENDA

Signs of the Inexorable Aging of America – V

What wheels do you yen for? If "sensible," not 90 m.p.h., is your speed, actor Hal Holbrook wants to sell you a Buick. The General Motors division has dropped its Youth pitch, after years of tittully trying to pizazz its rather stolid image with such muscular cars as the "Wildcat" and "LeSabre." Now a radio and TV campaign has been mounted starring the 61-year-old Holbrook and tailored to appeal to Buick's "traditional" customer—49 years of age, according to the company's demographers, and old enough to remember when fenders had portholes.



CURRENT READINGS

PRB welcomes materials on population topics for possible inclusion in Current Readings. Publishers may address review copies to Book Review Editor, POPULATION TODAY, Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

WORLD POPULATION & U.S. POLICY: The Choices Ahead, edited by Jane Menken. New York & London: W. W. Norton for The American Assembly, Columbia University, 1986. 255 pages. $18.95 hardcover, $8.95 softcover. ISBN 0-393-02419-9.

In 1963, The American Assembly, a distinguished center for policy studies established by Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University, published *The Population Dilemma* calling attention to population growth problems in less developed countries (LDCs). Recently the views expressed in that study have been called into question, particularly by critics of international population assistance and by proponents of population growth as a stimulus to economic growth.

The present volume is the result of a 1986 reexamination by the Assembly of these population issues. Editor Jane Menken's introduction traces the history of the debate and its reflection in U.S. policy, which since 1984 has maintained that population growth is a neutral phenomenon.

The 1986 National Academy of Sciences report is discussed by one of its principal architects, Samuel Preston, who reiterates its skepticism about basing international population assistance on population/development arguments. Ansley Coale, who has done a pioneering study of these relationships, finds greater consistency between LDC population and economic growth data and his original findings than did the NAS.

In other papers, Paul Demeny assesses current world demographic trends, John Bongaarts reviews fertility trends in LDCs and the variables that affect them, and George Simmons discusses factors underlying family planning program effectiveness in LDCs (the topic of another forthcoming NAS report). A paper by Michael Teitelbaum looks at the impact of immigration from LDCs on the U.S.

Finally, David E. Bell examines the policy choices open to the U.S. While calling for less population dogmatism, Bell holds to the view that U.S. and LDC interests are served by supporting strong family planning programs as part of development efforts – a view echoed in the book's final recommendations.

– Thomas W. Merrick

THE EUROPA YEAR BOOK 1986, by Europa Publications, Ltd. (dist. by Gale Research Co., Detroit, Mich.). London: Europa Publications, 1986. 3,089 pages in two volumes. $235.00 per set. ISBN 0-946653-14-3.

Published annually since 1960, *The Europa Year Book* presents a wealth of comprehensive information on a country-by-country basis. It contains extensive political, economic, statistical, and commercial information, arranged by individual nation. It has the distinction of being up-to-date: published annually, each new edition reflects the research of the previous year.

Starting with the 1986 edition, country sections are arranged within a single alphabet (in the past, the countries were separated into European and non-European sections), making use of the volumes less cumbersome.

In addition to the country profiles, the yearbook offers a lengthy section on over 1,500 international organizations, which includes full descriptions of each group's functions, organization, financial structure, and activities.

Europa's researchers' methods include direct mailing to all the institutions listed in the resource, as well as consultation with national statistical offices, government departments, and diplomatic missions. The result of their research is an authoritative and readable resource for those who need quick and concise (comprehensive, if not terribly detailed) information on a specific country or international organization.

– Janine Adams

Books Received

THE AGING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION: Implications for Business (Occasional Paper No. 6, Business Series), by J. A. Grobbelaar. Stellenbosch, South Africa: Institute for Futures Research, University of Stellenbosch, January 1986. 58 pages.

CONSEQUENCES OF MORTALITY TRENDS AND DIFFERENTIALS (Population Studies, No. 95 – ST/ESA/SER.A/95), by the Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs. New York: United Nations, 1986. 191 pages. $21.00.

CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE: Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Institution, edited by Kingsley Davis. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1986. 432 pages.

THE FAMILY, FERTILITY AND CONTRACEPTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: A Review of Seven Cross-Comparative Micro-Demographic Country Studies (Asian Population Studies Series, No. 65), by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok, Thailand: United Nations, 1986. 31 pages.

MANUAL IX: THE METHODOLOGY OF MEASURING THE IMPACT OF FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMMES ON FERTILITY, Addendum (Population Studies, No. 66 – ST/ESA/A/66/Add.1), by Dept. of International Economic and Social Affairs. New York: United Nations, 1986. 38 pages. $9.00.

SELECTED PAPERS OF THE 1984 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH, edited by Debbie Kluge. Washington, DC: National Council for International Health, 1986. 273 pages. $12.50.

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR AND SIZE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY: Country Report of Japan (Asian Population Studies Series No. 70), by Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok, Thailand: United Nations, 1985. 43 pages.

WORLD FOOD REPORT 1986, by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization. Rome: FAO, 1986. 72 pages.

SPOTLIGHT

LIBERIA

Population (mid-1986 est.): 2.3 million
Land area: 42,872 sq. miles
Births per 1,000 pop. (1985 est.): 48
Deaths per 1,000 pop. (1985 est.): 17
Rate of natural increase (1985 est.): 3.1 percent
Total fertility rate (1985 est.): 7.0
Infant mortality rate (1985 est.): 132 infant deaths per 1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth (1982): 49 years
GNP per capita (1984 est.): US$470
Capital: Monrovia

by Amy R. Sheon

Independent since 1847, Liberia is Africa's oldest independent nation. It lies within the "hump" of the continent's west coast, to the east of Sierra Leone, south of Guinea, and west of the Ivory Coast. The climate is tropical, with a rainy season falling between June and November, and a dry season for the rest of the year.

Liberia was settled beginning in the 1820s by freed American slaves sponsored by the American Colonization Society. Land was purchased from local tribes for a price which makes Manhattan look expensive: 6 firearms, 1 keg of gunpowder, 3 pairs of shoes, a barrel of rum, a box of beads and a few other trinkets. The capital city bears the name of U.S. President James Monroe, who was instrumental in directing U.S. government funds toward the settlement effort.

Today fewer than 5 percent of Liberians are descendants of the emancipated slaves. The rest belong to 16 indigenous tribes, who speak more than 20 local languages. After decades of Western missionary activity, nearly every Christian denomination is represented, with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism claiming the membership of nearly half of the population. Indigenous religious practices, however, remain influential.

The settlers and their descendants, known until recently as "Americo-Liberians," ruled the nation until 1980 when Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe seized power in a bloody coup, vowing an end to elite domination. Despite a promised return to civilian rule, a general election held in October 1985 was largely viewed as fraudulent. Frustration with economic decay and continuing corruption led to an attempted coup the following month, resulting in the arrest and death of many opposition leaders.

The oil shock of the last decade has severely hurt the Liberian economy, which is heavily dependent on imported petroleum. Despite abundant natural resources, the per capita income is less than $500. Although 70 percent of the labor force is employed in agriculture, per capita food production for the period 1980–1982 is 12 percent lower than it was in 1969–1971, and cereal imports and food aid have increased from 45,000 metric tons in 1974 to 151,000 in 1982.

Liberia's leading exports are iron ore, rubber, logs, diamonds, coffee, and cocoa. Seventy percent of all iron ore exported from sub-Saharan Africa comes from Liberia, as does 48 percent of all rubber exports. Firestone, established in Liberia since 1926, operates the world's largest rubber plantation near Monrovia. In addition, Liberia's low registration fees make it the world's largest registrar of ships – more than 2,000 ships fly the Liberian "flag of convenience."

Modest economic growth is barely outpacing population growth. (Per capita GNP has increased 0.9 percent per year over the last two decades.) As with many other nations on the African continent, rapidly declining mortality has not been offset by lowered fertility. While the crude death rate has fallen from an estimated 27 deaths per 1,000 population in the early 1950s to 17 in 1980, the crude birth rate has remained above 40 births per 1,000 in this time period, and may have risen in the last decade. As a result, the rate of natural increase has risen from 1.0 percent in 1950–1955 to 3.4 percent in 1975–1980.

Demographic data from Liberia are limited and dated. While three censuses have been conducted in the last three decades, the latest, completed in 1984, has not yet been processed. Thus, many population statistics are estimates and projections based on the 1974 Census. However, new data should be available shortly from the Liberian Demographic and Health Survey, conducted between February and July 1986 by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, with technical assistance provided by the Institute for Resource Development of Westinghouse. This nationwide survey of approximately 5,000 women aged 15-49 collected information on fertility and desired family size; family planning knowledge and use; childhood immunization, disease, and mortality; and socioeconomic and educational information.

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Children in Liberian village.